

外国社会与文化系列丛书



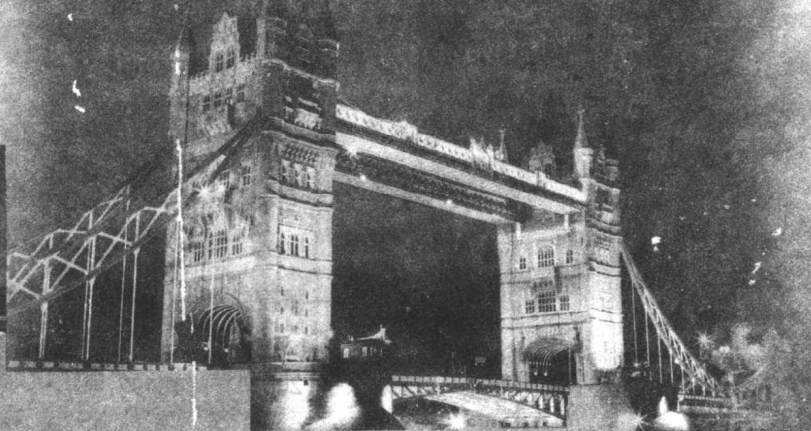
英国社会与文化

吴斐 编著



全国优秀出版社
武汉大学出版社

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前 言

随着中国加入 WTO 和迈入 21 世纪,全球化的趋势和进程成为我们必须面对的现实,而这一时代最重要的标志,市场经济的全球化与信息传播的全球化,则超越和突破了原本意义上的文化接收与渗透,为我们的价值观和道德观提供了更广阔的发展空间。《英国社会与文化》编著的宗旨,就是为中国广大的英语学习者提供一个窗口,通过对英国社会与文化方面的考察,从广义的文化哲学层面去审视西方文明的精髓:其一,梳理英国社会思想文化的脉络,理性思辨西方文明的思维模式和行为准则;其二,阐释英国社会艺术文化的美学价值,理解和领悟其深邃的内涵和人文关怀;其三,体验和鉴赏世纪更迭时期英国社会丰富多彩的实用文化,包括饮食、民俗、娱乐、休闲等各方面的文化范式。同时,《英国社会与文化》也将提供精美的英语语言材料,帮助读者在轻松愉悦、节奏舒缓的享受中开阔视野,提高英语语言修养,以成熟与自信的步伐,跨入英语语言的殿堂。

英国社会与文化对中国、对世界的影响远不止一个世纪。透过文化历史的幔帐,大不列颠的民族精神随着时代更迭衍变。英国国旗记录着三个王权一步步成功联合为一个王国的进程。英格兰的乡村,苏格兰的高地,威尔士的群山,北爱尔兰的海岸,处处洋溢着温文尔雅的绅士风度。英国的气候,构成了英国社会的一种独特文化:它造就了英国人的性格——小心谨慎且具有忍耐力和适应性。英国的君主立宪制是英国社会整体发展的典型例证,它

与上议院和下议院刚健的职责交相辉映,相得益彰。英联邦涵盖了许多不同的政府、种族、肤色、语言和观念及发展水平,他们凝聚成一种历史,一种文化。英国王室由封建式走向更高历史阶段是历史的一种抉择,它一直在用贵族的气质雕塑一种生命的形式美。维多利亚时代的“日不落”帝国形象早已在历史的风雨中淹没无闻,但沿袭历史的文化独特性和魅力仍给一向保守的英国民族自信心和自豪感。英国经济是现代规则和贵族风度的结合体,因为英国贵族之所以久享荣华,就因为一贯用财富原则指导其重商、经商。声名显赫的牛津和剑桥一直是英国知识和智慧的中心,他们就像独特的温室,为英国和世界培养出了众多的社会上层精英,展示着英国教育制度的辉煌成就。英国文学艺术的长廊中琳琅满目地陈列着具有精神超越性和灵魂升华感的伟大作品,他们早已进入接受主体的鉴赏、参与、再创造,将文学与艺术价值的审美升华为社会的审美,折射出其文化及其价值取向。英国的新闻传媒虽然承袭了客观、低调、含蓄的传统风格,其影响力却风靡世界。英国是一个精英辈出的国家,他们都与头衔和爵位有着割舍不断的渊源,即成名之后总会接受王室的授勋。英国城市的典雅和精致已经成为英国社会和文化中的一道景观,他们激活了英国经济,丰富了人民生活。风光旖旎的伦敦,令人流连忘返的景点名胜不胜枚举,是镶嵌在英国社会与文化中的明珠。英国人的体育、娱乐和休闲活动多种多样,他们或在户外采用各种不同的方式与大自然亲密接触,或入酒吧与至爱亲朋畅叙豪饮。英国社会的现代生活已经发生了很大的变化——传统与开放并存:英国社会的风俗习惯不仅在保守的基础上根深蒂固,而且还在不断创新,最突出的一个例子就是今日英国宗教的急剧衰退。达尔文的进化论给喜欢思考的英国人提供了令人信服的答案:人不是上帝创造的特殊生命,而是从更低的生命形式经过漫长的进化产生。科学似乎把神秘及神圣排挤出了宇宙,为英国社会与文化在再生中注入新的生命

活力。

英国社会与文化的浩瀚与深邃，绝非这本小书所能囊括与穷尽的。记得1995年到达英国的第一天，坐在从伦敦去爱丁堡的火车上，笔者就感受到英国古代文明与现代文化相互交织的气息：17、18世纪英国油画上的田园风光依稀可见；现代化的高速公路上奔驰的汽车川流不息；古老的城堡上还保留着世纪的族徽，空气中却不时传来摇滚乐的强劲节律；埃文河畔的圆形剧场仍在上演莎士比亚戏剧；航空港里的商人正用手提电脑交换股市的信息……这就是英国社会正在演绎的文化。愿本书能为读者开启一扇了解英国社会与文化的门户，并步入其中，去探寻，去思索，去收获……

编 者

2003年5月3

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I . A General Survey

1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Britain is not just one country and one people, even if some of its inhabitants think so. Britain is, in fact, a nation which can be divided into several separate parts, each part being an individual country. Thus, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales (and even Cornwall perhaps) do not claim to belong to "England", because their inhabitants are not strictly "English". They are Scottish, Irish, Welsh and many of them prefer to speak their own native tongue which is in turn incomprehensible to the others.

These cultural minorities have been Britain's original inhabitants. In varying degrees they have managed to preserve their national identity, their particular customs and way of life. This is probably even more true of the remote areas where traditional life has not been so affected by the growth of industrialism as the border areas have been. The Celtic races are said to be more emotional by nature than the English. An Irish temper is legendary. The Scots would rather forget about their reputation for excessive thrift and prefer to be remembered for their ballads and dances, while the

Welsh are famous for their singing. The Celtic temperament as a whole produces numerous writers and artists, such as the Irish Bernard Shaw, the Scottish Robert Burns, and the Welsh Dylan Thomas, to mention but a few.

That's why its full name is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

National Anthem

God Save the Queen

(I)

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen:
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the Queen.

(II)

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall:
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On thee our hopes we fix:
God save us all.

(III)

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign:
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice:
God save the Queen.

The Union Jack

Britain's Union Flag records in its name and fusion of three different emblems the growth of one kingdom out of the successive union of three crowns. The original English flag was white and bore the plain red cross of St. George, the country's patron saint. He was a 3rd century Christian soldier who had preferred death by beheading to denouncing his faith. The red cross recalled his martyrdom by Roman hands at Lydda, in Palestine. When the English Knights joined in the Crusades, they identified themselves by the saint's symbol. On their return, the religious emblem eventually became the national flag.

The choice of St. George as a patron has been linked with the tradition that during the Crusades the saint's apparition rescued the English from the fury of their Moslem foes. His sudden appearance on the battlefield threw the Mohammedans into confusion and fight. Thus the English recognized and acknowledged him as their patron. King Edward III adopted his name as a battle cry, and his emblem became the English flag.

St. Andrew was one of the 12 apostles. A simple fisherman, he, too, suffered martyrdom. The story is told that because he had converted a Roman Consul's wife to Christianity, her husband had him flogged and afterwards crucified. The cross used for the execution was shaped like the letter X, which explains how this became the saint's symbol and is still called St. Andrew's cross.

His association with Scotland dates back to the tradition that in 368 A. D. a monk transferred some of his relics from Constantiople to Scotland, to be buried there on the east coast, on the very spot where the city and cathedral of St. Andrew's now stand.

The story is further told that when the Picts and Scots were attacked by the Saxons, they called on St. Andrew for help. Looking upward, they noticed a strange formation of clouds. It seemed as if their white vapour had formed itself into the shape of a cross, backed by the blue sky. This appeared to the anxious watchers as an assurance of victory and a manifestation of the saint. Spurred on, they joined in battle and defeated the foe. After their victory, they adopted St. Andrew's cross as their emblem, with the specific colours of cloud and sky. It was the birth of the Scottish flag.

When James Stuart came from Scotland in 1603 to ascend the English throne as James I, the two kingdoms were united. The immediate problem was which flag to hoist on the king's ships. English sailors resented the Scottish colours and the Scots scorned the cross of St. George.

A compromise was the answer and it led to the creation of the first Union Flag. In 1606, a royal decree declared that the ships of the Kingdom of Great Britain "shall bear on their maintops the red cross, commonly called St. George's cross, and the white cross,

commonly called St. Andrew's cross". In 1707, after the Act of Union of England and Scotland, Queen Anne sanctioned this combination.

The white border which surrounds St. George's cross is due not to aesthetic or decorative reasons. It expresses deference to both original flags. Even in their union, they were meant to remain distinct. The rules of heraldry demanded that two colours must never be placed on top of each other, or even touch each other. They must be separated by a strip, no matter how narrow.

Neither the year nor place of St. Patrick's birth is known. It was toward the end of the 4th century somewhere in Britain or Gaul. At 16, pirates captured him and sold him as a slave to Ireland. After serving there for six years, he managed to escape to France. However, a vision, so it is said, made him return to the Ireland to rid it from snakes and convert its pagan people to the Christian faith. In pursuit of his task he miraculously overcame the magic and cunning opposition of the Druids.

Because he died an old man from natural cause, no cross was linked with his name at first. The red saltire on a white ground, which eventually became his emblem, dates only from the 12th century and was adopted from the heraldic device of an Irish family.

When the Parliament of Ireland was joined with that of Great Britain in 1801, what was then recognized as the cross of St. Patrick was duly incorporated in the Union Flag. Thus the Union Flag reflects in its distinctive markings and colours the inspiring story of three great saints and the traditions of three ancient races which, step by step, grew into one United Kingdom.

James I was the first common ruler of Scotland and England.

He signed his name the French way, Jacques, which spelled phonetically in its English pronunciation, was Jack. Colloquially, people nick-named his new flag the "Union Jack". The term therefore perpetuates the name of a specific king and one of the great moments of British history.

2. The Geography and the Weather

England

England occupies the largest, southern part of Great Britain with Wales to its west and Scotland to its north. It has an area of more than 130,000 square kilometres which takes up nearly 60% of the whole island. The southwest and west except for the Severn Valley and the Cheshire-Lancashire Plain (round Liverpool) are largely a plateau, with rolling plains, downs and occasional moors. The Pennines, a range of hills running from North Midlands to the Scottish border, are the principal mountain chain. But the highest peak of England, Scafell (978 m), is in the Lake District in north-west England. The east of England is mainly an open cultivated plain, narrowing in North Yorkshire to a passage (Vale of York) between coastal moors and the Pennines, and in Northumberland to a coastal strip.

Within England the eight administrative regions do not have strong cultural identities of their own. The styles of architecture do not vary, though there are parts of the southwest and north where stone houses were more common until recently than the red brick houses which predominate in most other regions. There is a clear

difference between the northern way of speaking English and the southern way, though each has local variants and each is different from what has been called 'standard English' or 'received pronunciation', which has no regional basis and is spoken by about 3 per cent of the people, scattered around the country.

Half of England's people live north of a line drawn from the south edge of Birmingham to the Wash. Four-fifths of them are in big towns or their suburbs.

With its lack of heavy industry and its slightly sunnier and milder climate England is more agreeable to some people than the north, though it has less good scenery. In the past fifty years its relative advantages have grown. Being nearer both to London and to the Continent it has had easier connections with the outside world, and nearly all today's visitors from other continents arrive at London airports. The south's economy has adapted itself more easily than the north's to the needs of the late twentieth century, and it is the main base of the most modern industries and enterprises. More people stay at school after the age of sixteen, more go to university, fewer are unemployed, more have middle-class jobs.

Scotland

The drive from England to Scotland provides travellers with many pleasant changes of scenery. As it is a fairly long journey, it is good to be able to travel with a friend who can take turns with you at the wheel.

A patriotic Scotsman travelling with an English friend may tell him he is going to see, in the Highlands, the finest scenery in the world. This may sound exaggerated, but on arriving in the High-

lands most people readily agree that the scenery is indeed magnificent.

The Highlands are, as the name implies, the hilly or mountainous region of the country; they form the greater part of the western half of Scotland north of Glasgow.

On the first night in Scotland a tourist may choose to put up at a hotel in the little town of Callander, which is known as one of 'the Gateways to the Highlands'. On the following day he can set out to see the various lakes, or rather lochs, in the neighbourhood, and will be delighted with the wild and romantic aspect of the countryside. When he returns to his hotel he will be glad to eat a copious 'high tea'. This is a meal which, in Scotland and many parts of northern England, takes the place of tea and dinner. It consists of one substantial course, such as one would have at dinner, followed by bread-and-butter, with jam or honey, and some cakes; tea is drunk with the meal, which is taken at about six o'clock in the evening. One has a light supper late in the evening.

The next morning many tourists journey on to the west coast, passing on their way Loch Lomond, one of the largest and most famous of the Scottish lakes (these are called 'lochs', with the exception of the Lake of Menteith, not far from Glasgow.) The road twists and turns, dips and climbs, but is not dangerous. The greatest hazard is the black-faced sheep; these animals are as active and impudent as goats, and frequently wander recklessly into the road. The tourist may also see a herd of long-haired Highland cattle, which look savage but are no more so than ordinary cattle. Eventually the road runs parallel with the sea, along a coastline fringed with little islands and made ragged with rocky bays and the deep in-